Subsidy for food supplies

439. SHRI KALPNATH RAI: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to state:

(a) the quantum of subsidy provided for food supplies during the current financial year;

(b) whether the amount is likely to be exceeded as a result of drought in various States; and

(c) if so, the excess amount likely to be provided?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI D. L. BAITHA): (a) Rs. 2000 crores.

(b) and (c) The amount of food subsidy depends upon the level of procurement, off-take, food stocks and other factors. Due to drought, off-take of foodgrains may increase this year and may affect the food subsidy. The actual requirement will be reflected in the Budget to be presented on 29-2-1988.

Payment of arrears to the sugarcane growers

440. SHRI MUKHTIAR SINGH MALIK: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to state:

(a) the estimated amount of arrears due to sugarcane growers outstanding against sugar mills in the country as on date;

(b) if so, the details of the amount; and

(c) whether Government propose to issue any directives for the payment of sugarcane dues to the sugarcane growers within a stipulated period and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI D. L. BAITHA): (a) and (b) The position of cane price payments is available upto 31st January, 1988. The details are as under:

(Rs. crores)

1	Total cane price payable for 1987-88 season	969.21
2	Total price paid upto 31st January, 1988	776.32
3	Amount of cane price remaining upaid	192.89
4	Arrears relating to earlier seasons	12.68

(c) There is already a provision in the Sugarcane (Control) Order, 1966 that the price has to be paid within a period of 14 days from the delivery of sugarcane. However, ensuring timely payment is primarily the responsibility of the State Governments who have the necessary powers and field organizations to enforce payment. The Central Government has been monitoring the position and requesting State Governments to take necessary action.

Cooperative credit to agriculturists

441. SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the press report which appeared in "The Hindustan Times" of the 8th January, 1988 wherein it has been stated that the flow of cooperative credit to Agriculturists had been lagging behind the Seventh Five Year Plan targets;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) whether Government propose to take fresh initiatives to achieve the target?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COOPERATION IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHYAM LAL YADAV): (a) Yes, Sir,

(b) The short-falls in achievement of flow of cooperative credit to agriculturists during the first two years of the 7th Five Year Plan period were mainly due to natural calamities and wilful default in cooperatives resulting in slow recycling of funds.

(c) The State and U.T. Governments have been advised from time to time to take appropriate action in this regard for achieving the plan target.

Working of public sector fertilizer units

442. SHRI MUKHTIAR SINGH MALIK:

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news report which appeared in the "Times of India" of the 8th January, 1988 wherein it has been stated that public sector fertiliser units are still in the red and if so, the reasons therefor;

(b) whether Government propose to inquire into the working of all the fertiliser units in the country through a High Powered Committee to suggest improvements; and

(c) if not, what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF FERTLIZERS IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI R. PRABHU): (a) Yes, Sir; the newspaper report states that during 1986-87 Fertilizer Corporation of India (FCI) and Hindustan Fertilizer Corporation (HFC) continued to be in the red while Projects & Development India Limited (PDIL) joined their ranks as a loss-incurring concern though it had made a small operational profit. The losses incurred by FCI and HFC have been mainly due to design deficiencies and power and equipment problems. PDIL earned an operating profit of Rs. 26 lakhs, although, after adjusting an expenditure of Rs. 65 lakhs relating to earlier year the net result is a loss of Rs. 39 lakhs.

(b) and (c) No, Sir; as the working of the Public Sector fertilizer companies, including sick companies, is reviewed periodically and steps are taken to improve their performance, there is no proposal, at present to appoint a High Powered Committee.

Increase in the prices of aluminium

443. SHRI MUKHTIAR SINGH MALIK: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the prices of aluminium had been increased by Government during the 3rd week of January, 1988;

(b) if so, what are the reasons therefor;

(c) to what extent it has affected the common man in the country; and

(d) whether Government propose to provide aluminium to the small scale industry on subsidised rates; if not, what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF MINES IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI RAMANAND YADAV): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The prices of primary aluminium are statutorily controlled and were revised with effect from 19-1-1988 after taking into account all relevant factors especially the increases in power tariff by some of the State Governments.

(c) The increase in the sale price of primary aluminium has been less than six per cent. The present sale price is internationally competitive despite our high power rates. There has been no representation from the trading community.

(d) Does not arise.